

The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 called for each state that wanted to participate in the new Federal preservation program to create a review board. The idea was that such boards would serve a vital “checks and balances” role, allowing National Register nominations and other functions of the State Historic Preservation Offices to be screened by a panel of professional and citizen members. This essential step between the review of a nomination and its approval in Washington, D.C., has become a critical part of the preservation process.

The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board has always consisted of about nine members appointed by the Governor. By Federal law, board members must meet Federal qualifications in the following professions: Prehistoric archaeology, historic archaeology, architecture (a registered architect), architectural history, and historian. Additionally, a citizen member can be appointed by the Governor. The review board plays an active role by representing a broad cross-section of Indiana, both professionally and geographically.

At first, members of the review board reviewed, drafted, and wrote National Register nominations, based on input from the public. Mainly this is because for about seven years, the board and the Indiana SHPO operated without any staff. By 1977, staff was in place and was reviewing and editing National Register applications. To this day, Indiana remains an “open state” - the DHPA and Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board generally do not prepare National Register nominations. We accept them from the public or hired consultants. Approval of National Register applications by the board assures that nominations meet the criteria for eligibility and documentation requirements. The board meetings also serve as an open forum where interested parties can speak out about their community or property.

In 1977, the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board received a new challenge. P.L. 163 of that year established a separate Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, and mandated that

No historic site or historic structure owned by the state and no historic site or historic structure listed on the state or national register may be altered, demolished, or removed by any project funded, in whole or in part, by the state of Indiana unless a certificate of approval has been granted by the review board.

This provision of the law, now called “Section 18” after its chapter location in Indiana Code, has remained in place since 1977. The members of the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board have determined the outcome of hundreds of certificates of approval. Agencies of the State of Indiana request certificates of approval for projects ranging from demolition of a building to excavations for utilities that might impact archaeological sites. In all cases, the board uses the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. Promulgated and drafted by the National Park Service's historic preservation staff, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* are a set of ten broad standards intended to allow new uses for buildings or structures while retaining as much historic character as feasible. Typically, technical staff from the DHPA provides input to these requests as well.

Another role of the Review Board is much more planning oriented. By Federal law, boards of State Historic Preservation Offices have final authority in the allocation of annual Historic

Preservation Fund (HPF) sub-grants. DHPA receives its annual funding from the National Park Service, a portion of which is dedicated to projects that help DHPA fulfill our preservation plan. Typically, these projects are for documentation, nomination, or direct preservation of historic resources, and they are matched by the local communities or non-profits that apply for them. Each year, the board gives final consideration and approval to these applications.

State review boards like Indiana's Historic Preservation Review Board work because of the dedication of their members. Since the board's inception in 1970, other than for travel costs, no member of the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board has received any salary for participating. It is an honor to be selected for the Review Board, but it is equally a call to public service. Members of the Review Board have and continue to be persons of outstanding qualification and remarkable dedication to their state.